



Special points of interest:

- November 30th Commission Meeting
- International companies place U.S. headquarters in Maryland
- Meet the Commissioners!
- Port of Baltimore named 4th in the world!
- Upcoming events in your area!

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Keeping up with the Middle Eastern Commission

November 2010

Message from the Commission — Upcoming Meeting!

Greetings!

The Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs will be holding their bi-monthly meeting on November 30, 2010 at 6:00pm in Annapolis.

The meeting is scheduled to take place at the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). MHEC is the State of Maryland's higher education coordinating board responsible for establishing statewide policies for Maryland public and private colleges and universities and for-profit career schools. MHEC also administers state financial aid programs that affect students on a statewide basis.

MHEC ensures that the people of Maryland have access to high quality, diverse, adequately funded, effectively managed and capably led system of postsecondary education. It accomplishes this mis-

sion through the provision of statewide planning, leadership, coordination and advocacy for the State's postsecondary educational institutions and through the administration of State financial aid programs.

Maryland is fortunate to have 57 colleges and universities and over 175 private career schools from which to choose. Collectively, Maryland's colleges and universities offer every kind of educational experience, whether for the traditional college student who goes directly to college from high schools, or for the students who have already begun their careers and want to learn new skills. Maryland is proud that nearly one-third of its residents 25 and older have a bachelor's degree or higher, which is the 4th highest percentage among all states.

One of the goals of MHEC which is important for the Com-

mission is their work to ensure equal educational opportunity for Maryland's diverse citizenry.

Our Commission meeting is free and open to the public and will be held at 839 Bestgate Road, Suite 400, Annapolis, MD 21401. We hope for you to come and participate!

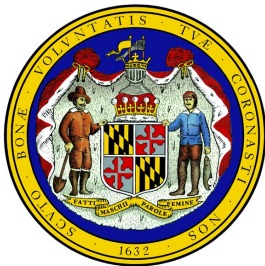
Commission meetings are subject to location changes, please visit our website for any updates:

www.middleeastern.maryland.gov



Maryland Higher Education Commission. 839 Bestgate Road, Annapolis, MD 21401

Two Companies choose Maryland for their U.S. Headquarters



Russian-based Investment & Venture Fund of Tatarstan and National Scientific and Technology (NST) holding company opened their U.S. headquarters at the Maryland International Incubator. The Maryland International Incubator connects Maryland and International companies for successful joint ventures through business services, state-of-the-art facilities and world-class resources.

The Fund promotes innovation in the Republic of Tatarstan, making investments in machine building, aviation, petro-

chemistry and medicine. In similar news, the Republic of Kazakhstan's NST plans to collaborate with the University of Maryland faculty and build relationships with Maryland businesses.



“In 2008, Governor O’Malley fought for some of the most sweeping foreclosure reform laws in the nation...”

Administrative Report

As the Commission continues its progress, it is our goal to keep our community informed on important Commission and State news.

In the most recent Commission news, we are excited to announce that Maryland has officially signed a “Friendship Agreement” with Baghdad, Iraq. The agreement was signed by Maryland Secretary of State, John P. McDonough and Dr. Mohammed al-Shimary, Deputy Governor of the Governorate of Baghdad.

The purpose of the Friendship Agreement is for Baghdad and Maryland to explore opportunities to cultivate a greater understanding of each other, raise cross-cultural awareness, and generally advance the friendship between the State of Maryland and the Governorate of Baghdad.

Furthermore, the agreement states that Baghdad and Maryland will endeavor to develop a climate which fosters interaction among entrepreneurs and business enterprises, promotes investment, and expands commerce and fair trade.

The latter portion of the friendship agreement aligns with the Commission’s initiatives to explore potential business opportunities between Maryland and the Middle East.

As the Middle East region begins their major infrastructure build out, the Commission will work on identifying potential opportunities for Maryland businesses to benefit from the abundance of projects in the region.

A good source of information in regards to the Middle Eastern business and trade outlook comes from the National U.S.

Arab Chamber of Commerce, headquartered in Washington, D.C..

For more information you can visit the Chamber’s website at: www.nusacc.org.

In order to best serve our community the Commission wants to hear you! If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns you can contact the Commission at:

MidEast@GOCl.state.md.us

You can also reach the Administrator directly at:

410-767-7925

We hope to hear from you!



Statement from Governor O’Malley on Proposed Court Action on Foreclosures

On October 16, Governor Martin O’Malley issued this statement following the vote of the Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure to recommend that the Court of Appeals adopt an emergency rule change to foreclosure actions:

“I want to commend Chief Judge Bell for recognizing the widespread scope of improper foreclosure filings and I applaud the Rules Committee’s vote to propose an emergency measure that will help put the brakes on potentially wrongful foreclosures. The proposed new rule is a big step forward and will enable the courts to stop foreclosures with improper filings unless lenders, servicers and attorneys can show why

they should go forward.

“In particular, the Rules Committee’s decision to make sure that homeowners do not bear the costs of the mess created by lenders’ shoddy practices shows the Court’s understanding of who caused the problem and who should bear the responsibility to fix it.”

Previously, Governor O’Malley joined with members of Maryland’s Congressional delegation in strong support of action the court deemed appropriate to help reassure regulators and homeowners that Maryland families were being treated fairly.

In 2008, Governor O’Malley

fought for some of the most sweeping foreclosure reform laws in the nation, providing extended time for a solution to foreclosure, and changing the foreclosure process to include a 45-day warning to homeowners. In addition, the Governor’s reforms required that a lender produce a copy of the note at the time of foreclosure.

Reforms Governor O’Malley fought for this year provide a forum for reaching a solution. Effective July 1, homeowners facing foreclosure have the right to demand a sit-down, face-to-face mediation session with their mortgage servicers to negotiate an alternative to foreclosure. More than 165 families have taken advantage of that right so far, scheduling

SPOTLIGHT: Meet your Middle Eastern American Commissioner, Farzaneh Riar

Established in October of 2007, the Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs began serving the community at the highest executive level.

The Governor's Office was selective in their appointment process to ensure demographic, gender, and country of origin diversity. The Commission represents nine different Middle Eastern countries. Specifically there are Commissioners from Palestine, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Egypt and Jordan.

Ms. Farzaneh Riar was appointed to the Commission to represent the large Iranian American community in Maryland. A resident of Montgomery County, Ms. Riar is a health policy consultant. In this capacity, she has dedicated her time on the Commission working with the Community Development and Workforce Development committees.

Ms. Riar received her undergraduate degree in Microbiol-

ogy and Cell Biology from the University of Maryland. She then went on to receive her Masters of Science in Clinical Physiology and Biophysics from the Georgetown University, and received her Masters of Public Health from the George Washington University.

Along with the Commission, Ms. Riar has also served on the Governor's Transition Team for the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. In this capacity, she provided recommendations to the Governor and incoming secretary in regards to Maryland's healthcare and healthcare reform.

As part of her thesis for the George Washington University, Ms. Riar developed and designed a web-based electronic health data capturing tools for strategic planning and primary care practice management. Using her expertise and knowledge of the health field, Ms. Riar has become an advocate for researching the health needs of Maryland's Middle Eastern Americans.

In June of 2009, Ms. Riar aided in the preparation of the Commission's first Health Conference to address these needs. She is also currently working with other members of the Commission to develop a initiative for Maryland to better capture data of Middle Eastern Americans in the healthcare system.

As a Commissioner, Farzaneh Riar has been recognized by the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans, a national Iranian organization, for her appointment to the Commission.

With Ms. Riar's enthusiasm and hard work, the Commission has been able to host their first Health Conference in 2009 and begin planning for a follow up conference in 2011. Representing the Iranian American community in Maryland, she has also provided a strong voice for her community and continuously ensures that the Iranian community needs are addressed in the most efficient means possible.

"Using her expertise and knowledge of the health field, Ms. Riar has become an advocate for researching the health needs of Maryland's Middle Eastern Americans."



Farzaneh Riar and her husband, Dr. Amjad Riar, at the Governor's Iftar Reception.



“...we will fight to give emergency responders and law enforcement the tools they need to get a job done and the equipment they need to get it done safely.”

New Additions to Maryland's World-Class Emergency Response

On October 20th, Governor Martin O'Malley gathered with members of Maryland's public safety and medical community at Lee Airport to announce an important step in improving public safety in Maryland that includes replacing the state's aging medevac helicopter.

The Board of Public Works, comprised of Governor O'Malley, Comptroller Peter Franchot and Treasurer Nancy Kopp, approved a contract to begin replacing Maryland's aging medevac helicopter fleet. A contract for \$72.2 million was awarded to Agusta Aerospace Corporation for six new AW 139 helicopters.

“For as long as Lt. Governor Brown and I have the privilege of serving the people of our State, we will fight to give emergency responders and law enforcement the tools they need to get the job done and the equipment they need to get it done safely,” Governor O'Malley said. “Today we fulfill promises we made to the people of Maryland to continue improving public safety even in tough economic times. To move Maryland forward, we must continue the improvement that is underway across our State in public safety and disaster preparedness. We are investing in the latest technologies and equipment so our first responders have what they need to maintain Maryland's world class emergency response system.”

“We are fortunate to have the best trauma system in the world here in Maryland,” said Speaker Michael E. Busch. “I am proud that the Governor and the legislature had the foresight to continue making critical investments in our public safety infrastructure to support our first responders and help save lives.”

The new helicopters contain the latest in avionics and equipment, including terrain awareness warning systems, night vision compatibility, cockpit voice and video recorders, radar altimeters, and advanced instrument flight rating capabilities, all recommended by the Federal Aviation Administration. The new helicopters also provide more space in the patient and cargo areas, enabling medics to have better access to patients and to carry rescue equipment on board all the time.

The Governor also referred to an item that will be before the Board of Public Works in two weeks which will begin to build the network that will permit police, fire, and EMS personnel to communicate with each other during an emergency. Currently, agencies at the local, state, and federal level operate on different radio frequencies and communications during times of emergency and disaster can be difficult and inefficient. Streamlining communications will save money while expediting emergency services for citizens. The new system will provide a robust network that will be the backbone of interoperability between first responders at the local, state and federal level.

“These new helicopters and a communications system that enables us to immediately cross jurisdictional boundaries are significant improvements to public safety capabilities in Maryland,” State Police Superintendent Colonel Terrence B. Sheridan said. “I thank Governor O'Malley for his persistent work and his constant leadership to ensure we are equipped with these new technologies. I thank the members of the General Assembly who spent many hours reviewing the future of Maryland's emergency medical services system. I also appreci-

ate the hard work of members of the Maryland Department of Transportation who coordinated the helicopter bid process. We will use these technologies to make Maryland safer.”

The first two new aircraft are expected to be delivered in about 18 months. All six are expected to be in operation in less than two years. The new aircraft will replace the oldest of the current Maryland State Police helicopters. Eight of the 11 helicopters currently in use are more than 20 years old. Increasing age and flight hours result in increasing mandated inspections and maintenance, meaning the aircraft are increasingly unavailable for use.

Maryland's medevac program began in the State Police in March 1970, in cooperation with Dr. R Adams Cowley and the University of Maryland Shock Trauma Center. Since then, more than 130,000 patients have been flown to life-saving care at one of Maryland's network of trauma and specialty-care hospitals.



Governor Martin O'Malley at Lee Airport in Edgewater.

Baltimore's Trade Zone Ranked Fourth in the World by Financial Times Magazine

fDi Magazine, produced by the *Financial Times*, has ranked Baltimore's Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) #74, managed by the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC), as the fourth best port-related Foreign Trade Zone in the world.

The magazine analyzed 700 economic zones, dwindling that number down to 200 before requesting dossiers from each nominated FTZ. Baltimore came in fourth under the "Best Port Zone" category for 2010/2011, following the zones of Shanghai and Tangier, Morocco and Jacksonville, FL. Of the remaining U.S. port zones on the top 10 list, the Foreign Trade Zone of Los Angeles ranked eighth.

The magazine evaluated Zones based on their economic potential, promotional strategy, cost effectiveness, facilities, transportation, incentives and foreign direct investment strategy.

Baltimore's Foreign Trade Zone is one of the more active FTZ's in the United States with 13 current operators utilizing over 3 million square feet of activated space. At the end of fiscal year 2009, imported goods were valued at \$1.7 billion with the highest value of commodities being automobiles, aluminum and alcohol. FTZ #74 serviced 82 businesses and contributed to more than 762 full-time jobs among its operators, with a total employment of almost 1,000 (including part-time

and seasonal) workers. The Zone was responsible for the re-exporting of over \$13 million in goods overseas.

"Baltimore has really come on the map in terms of its FTZ because of its London Metal Exchange warehouses. Metals like aluminum comes down from Canada and needs a lot of warehouse space. We're probably the most well-known port on the East Coast for London Metal Exchange warehousing. This has really put us on the map," says Elizabeth Weiblen Hines, director, Foreign Trade Zone #74, Baltimore Development Corporation.

"There are 263 FTZs in the U.S. and a lot of them have designated space, like 30,000 acres, but they only have one operator or business that needs it. They said, 'if they build it they will come' and that's not necessarily right. What the BDC brings is the ability to be flexible and to quickly activate FTZ space when a company needs it. That's one of the things we've brought to the table and is changing the way businesses see Baltimore," she continues.

The FTZ has always been important to Baltimore City and the BDC. Businesses find a great warehouse and then approach the BDC to request FTZ benefits. "Having the city be the grantee of FTZ space means we've been able to do it more efficiently."

Another major factor contribut-

ing to the ranking and the success of the Port of Baltimore, according to Hines, is that it is the furthest inland port on the East Coast with one-third of the U.S. population within an 8-hour drive. This proximity to market is a main reason that businesses choose Baltimore. The city also has a great rail system and has easy access to the Interstate 95.

Hines says she hopes that the ranking will help the BDC as it continues to ramp up it increasingly directs its attention to attracting businesses overseas to Baltimore.



"Baltimore came in fourth under the 'Best Port Zone' category for 2010/2011, following the zones of Shanghai and Tangier, Morocco and Jacksonville, FL."



Boat docking at the Port of Baltimore. The Port of Baltimore is located at 401 E Pratt St # 1653, Baltimore, MD



GOCI

Governor's Office of Community Initiatives
301 West Preston Street
15th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: 410-797-7925
Fax: 410-333-7542
E-mail: MidEast@goci.state.md.us

**"Serving the Middle Eastern
American community throughout the
State at the highest executive level."**



On October 11, 2007, Governor Martin O'Malley signed the Executive Order to create the Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs. The Commission was created to address the need for State agencies to respond effectively to the needs and concerns of Maryland citizens with ancestral heritage in Middle Eastern countries.

The Commission was appointed by the Governor and his administration in order to address the issues facing the Middle Eastern American community at the highest level of the Executive Branch of Maryland State Government.

We're on the web!
www.middleeastern.maryland.gov

Upcoming Events in Maryland

Stay updated on various activities around our great State and Metro area!

November 12

"The Domestic Crusaders" a landmark Muslim-American Play
7:30pm at the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Washington, DC
For more information, visit:
www.domesticcrusaders.com

November 14

Malek Jandali, Pianist in Concert
7:30 pm at The Kennedy Center
Washington D.C
For more information, call
800-444-1324 or visit
www.kennedycenter.com

November 14

GoRemy Live—Comedian
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the
Baltimore Comedy Factor
For more information, visit:
www.baltimorecomedy.com

November 17

"The Economic Outlook for the
Middle East Region"
12:00pm at the Middle East
Institute, Washington, D.C.
For more information, visit:
www.mei.edu

November 21

Jewish Folk Arts Festival
12:00pm to 6:00 pm at the
Jewish Community Center of
Greater Washington
For more information, call
301-587-1739

November 30

Middle Eastern American
Commission Meeting
Annapolis, MD



If you would like to submit an announcement to post, please email it to: MidEast@goci.state.md.us. Every announcement must contain a date, title, location, time, phone number or website. We reserve the right to edit or delete any submissions.